

Message Text

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SUBJ: VIEWS OF REGIONS MINISTER MORLINO ON GOVERNMENT CRISIS

SUMMARY: IN MEETING JANUARY 22 WITH AMBASSADOR, MINISTER FOR REGIONS MORLINO STATED THAT DC WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO AVOID EARLY PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. POSSIBILITY OF DC-PSI TWO-PARTY GOVERNMENT AS WELL AS OTHER SOLUTIONS ARE BEING INTENSIVELY STUDIED BY DC LEADERS AND DECISION WILL BE FORTHCOMING IN NEXT FEW DAYS. HOWEVER, MORLINO EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT PRIMARY SOCIALIST PURPOSE IN CRISIS MAY BE TO WEAKEN DC AND, IF THIS PROVES TO BE THE CASE, EARLY ELECTIONS WILL BE UNAVOIDABLE. END SUMMARY.

1. AMBASSADOR MET WITH MINISTER FOR REGIONS MORLINO JANUARY 22. AMBASSADOR TOLD MORLINO THAT WE HOPE FOR A SPEEDY AND POSITIVE SOLUTION TO ITALIAN GOVERNMENT CRISIS. MORLINO STATED THAT DC WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO FIND ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION. MAIN PROBLEM IS POLITICAL "PRICE" DEMANDED BY THE SOCIALISTS.

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2. MORLINO SAID THAT DC LEADERS NOW INTENSIVELY DE-

BATING POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS, INCLUDING POSSIBILITY OF ACCEPTING SOCIALIST OFFER OF A TWO-PARTY DC-PSI GOVERNMENT. GRAVE ECONOMIC SITUATION, RECENTLY AGGRAVATED BY LIRA CRISIS, MAKES SPEEDY FORMATION OF NEW GOVERNMENT ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT.

3. HOWEVER, MORLINO SAID THAT DC CONCERNED BY TWO MAJOR DANGERS IN DC-PSI FORMULA. SUCH A GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE WEAK AND SHORT-LIVED, THUS SIMPLY AGGRAVATING ECONOMIC SITUATION. MORE IMPORTANTLY PSI MOTIVATION IS FUNDAMENTAL. SOCIALISTS HAVE BEEN INSISTING THAT DC ACCEPT "RESULTS OF JUNE 15" ELECTIONS IN GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT. THEIR AIM MAY BE SIMPLY TO WEAKEN THE DC BY MAKING IT ABANDON ITS REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENT PARTNER AND PUBLICLY SUBMIT TO PSI DEMANDS. IF THIS IS BASIC PSI PURPOSE, AN ACCORD WOULD CAUSE UNACCEPTABLE LOSS OF "PRETIGE" AND ELECTORAL IMAGE TO DC. EARLY ELECTIONS WOULD THEN BECOME UNAVOIDABLE AND COUNTRY WOULD BE WITHOUT EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT FOR "100" DAYS MINIMUM NECESSARY FOR A PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS TO BE CALLED, HELD AND A NEW GOVERNMENT FORMED.

4. DISCUSSION THEN TURNED TO SITUATION IN DC PARTY. MORLINO PRAISED DC SECRETARY ZACCAGNINI FOR POSITIVE IMAGE HE PROJECTS FOR THE PARTY. AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED STRONG HOPE THAT DC WOULD BRING FORWARD "NEW FACES" IN PARTY AND CITED EXAMPLES OF TWO PARTICULARLY IMPRESSIVE YOUNG DC MAYORS HE HAD RECENTLY MET (BARI AND PADOVA). MORLINO, ECHOING SENTIMENTS PREVALENT IN MORO FACTION OF PARTY, SAID THAT "NEW WAY" OF RUNNING PARTY AND GOVERNMENT WAS MORE IMPORTANT THAN "NEW FACES" PER SE, BUT SEEMED TO AGREE THAT SOME NEW BLOOD WOULD BE USEFUL.

5. AT CONCLUSION OF CONVERSATION, MORLINO EXPOUNDED AT LENGTH ON NEED FOR GREATER ECONOMIC COOPERATION AMONG WESTERN COUNTRIES. ECONOMIC RELATIONS, HE SAID, ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS HERE OF US-ITALIAN RELATIONS. AMBASSADOR AGREED AND STATED THAT US MAY BE ABLE TO BE HELPFUL IN PRESENT LIRA CRISIS THROUGH SWAP ARRANGEMENT REQUESTED BY BANK OF ITALY.

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6. COMMENT: DC VICE SECRETARY RUFFINI CONFIRMED TO EMBOFF JANUARY 22 THAT PARTY LEADERS HAVE SERIOUS RESERVATIONS ABOUT DC-PSI GOVERNMENT. HE SAID THAT WHILE LEFT-WING OF PARTY (DONAT-CATTIN, GALLONI AND ZACCAGNINI) STRONGLY FAVOR DC-PSI MORO-LED GOVERNMENT, MORO'S POSITION IS UNCERTAIN, ANDREOTTI TENDS NOW TO BE NEGATIVE, WHILE RUMOR, COLOMBO, FANFANI, AND THE PICCOLI-BISAGLIA FORCES OPPOSE. RUFFINI PREDICTED THAT PSI PROPOSAL FOR TWO-

PARTY SOLUTION WOULD PROBABLY BE REJECTED AND COUNTER-
OFFER OF DC-PRI-PSI GOVERNMENT MADE IN ORDER TO PUT BALL
BACK INTO PSI COURT.VOLPE

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